

NHSC UPDATE!

UDS: Documenting Our Success in Building Better Systems of Care



Uniting Communities in Need
With Clinicians Who Care

Dear Partner:

Here is something that we can all be excited about. The compilation of the many successes that the sites and communities we work with have had in the last few years have been instrumental in helping them share their accomplishments in more concrete ways. It has also helped others to see how they can improve their own health care services. That is the power of data!

*The Uniform Data System (UDS) is the vehicle that has allowed us to capture the essential data and that will lead us to well-documented ways in which we all can improve the health of the Nation's underserved. This is why we feel that we need to encourage **all** sites to submit their data through this system.*

Together, we can reach 100 percent participation in this effort!

As always, please let us hear from you. E-mail us your feedback at NHSCupdate@matthewsgroup.com.

The UDS is an invaluable tool.

Implemented in 1996 by the Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC), the UDS has proven to be an invaluable tool. It has helped to capture program performance data and has provided an accurate picture of the impact BPHC and its partners have had on improving and expanding access to health care for the Nation's underserved. So much so that in 1998 the Bureau expanded the UDS to encourage participation by sites that have an NHSC-obligated clinician on staff, even when not receiving grant support from BPHC.

These sites have found that the reporting process has had a positive impact on their own day-to-day operations. For example, Joanie Perkins, practice manager at St. Vincent/Randolph County Hospital and Health Services in Winchester, Indiana, says...*"We collect this same information anyway to use internally, but I can say that this reporting does assist us when talking with our State and Federal legislators about the service we provide, the people that we serve, as well as the amount of care that we deliver through our very affordable discount fee schedule to low-income populations that lack health insurance coverage."*

Many lessons have been learned.

The UDS and its analysis have proved to us what we already knew: The NHSC, together with its network of partners, is an essential component of the Nation's health care safety net. This is what Mary Lou Weber, controller of North Florida Pediatrics and executive director of the Florida Association of Rural Health Clinics, has to say: *"This was the first year that I have had to submit the UDS data, and the numbers will be valuable in talking with local partners as well as State and Federal representatives about the important safety net role that we play in providing essential health care services to vulnerable populations."*

From the 1999 data, we know that:

- Approximately 3.6 million people received care from an NHSC-obligated clinician.
- 79 percent of the people who received care from an NHSC-obligated clinician were at or below 200 percent of the national poverty level.
- 30 percent of the people were Medicaid patients, 40 percent were Medicare patients, and 30 percent were uninsured.
- NHSC and BPHC grant-supported sites together serve 25 percent of the Nation's underserved.

What sites need to know about UDS...

- NHSC sites need to submit UDS reports for the previous year by February 15.
- Sites that have not submitted a report for 2000 should be encouraged to do so now.
- Sites that are grantees of programs administered by BPHC need to submit only the standard UDS.
- For more information on the Web about the standard UDS, go to <http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov/uds>.
- Sites that have an NHSC-obligated clinician on staff but are not grantees need to submit only the condensed NHSC UDS.
- For additional information about the NHSC UDS, go to http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov/nhsc/pages/community_assistance/ca_uds.htm.
- Sites that require assistance should contact their HRSA Field Office or the NHSC Community Support Branch at (301) 594-4165.

Working Together to Improve and Expand Access to Health Care